

DHS Expected Practices

Specialty: Ophthalmology

Subject: Pterygium

Date: April 29, 2014

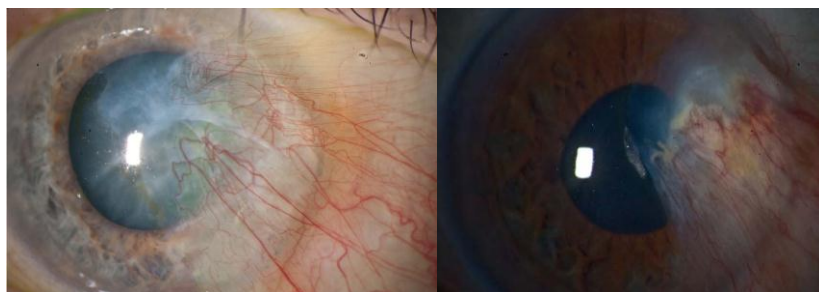
Purpose: Referral guidelines regarding patients with pterygia.

Target Audience: DHS and Community Partner providers

Expected Practice: In the Los Angeles County DHS system, pterygia are removed when causing:

- Vision decreased below 20/50 with correction* because of astigmatism or obstruction (ie, crossing the visual axis)
- Significant inflammation that cannot be treated with lubrication with artificial tears and ointment.

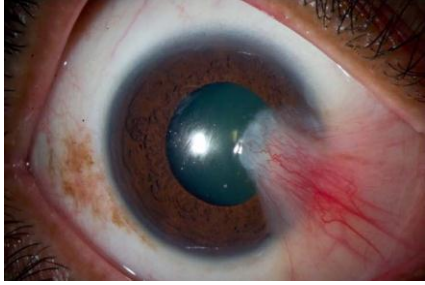
Please see below for examples of pterygia that would meet the above criteria:



Pterygia crossing visual axis, vision below 20/50

This *Expected Practice* was developed by a DHS Specialty-Primary Care Work Group to fulfill the DHS mission to ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, and cost-effective health care. SPC Work Groups, composed of specialist and primary care provider representatives from across LA County DHS, are guided by 1) real-life practice conditions at our facilities, 2) available clinical evidence, and 3) the principle that we must provide equitable care for the entire population that LA County DHS is responsible for, not just those that appear in front of us. It is recognized that in individual situations a provider's clinical judgment may vary from this *Expected Practice*, but in such cases compelling documentation for the exception should be provided in the medical record.

* Patients complaining of decreased vision who have not had a refraction for glasses in the past two years should be sent for refraction prior to referral via local low cost options (please see DHS Expected Practice for Refraction at http://ladhs.lacounty.gov/wps/PA_1_QDN2DSD30OT360INSUEF4L0000/DhsSite/DHSCCL/pdf/Optho_Refractive_Error.pdf).



Inflamed/irritated pterygium post lubrication

If a patient does not meet these criteria, or if a lubrication regimen has not been initiated, we recommend the following:

- Artificial tears in both eyes tid-qid and prn
- Lubrication with ointment at night before bed
 - Lacrilube is available on DHS formulary but there are also many OTC brands (examples include Refresh PM and GenTeal PM).
 - The ointment is applied into the eye by pulling the lower lid down and squeezing a thin ribbon into the inferior fornix then closing the eye. This makes the vision blurry for a bit given the ointment coverage so it's best for patients to do this right before sleep.
 - The patient also needs to wear sun protection (hat, sunglasses) to prevent irritation and further growth of the pterygium.

If the patient does meet the above criteria for referral, please provide the following information in the referral to Optometry/Ophthalmology:

- Visual Acuity
- Presence/absence of inflammation (and/or external photograph)
- Approximate size/relationship to pupil (and/or external photograph)
- Presence of active growth, abnormal appearance, or any concerning factors

More information regarding pterygia can be found here:

<http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/pterygium-surfers-eye>